

**Annual Report of Accomplishments and Outcomes, July 2012 – June 2013**  
**Minnesota Occupational Health and Safety Surveillance Program – Fundamental Program**  
**Minnesota Department of Health**

**Principal Investigator:** Allan Williams, PhD; [allan.williams@state.mn.us](mailto:allan.williams@state.mn.us), 651-201-5905

**Program Director:** Adrienne Landsteiner, MPH; [adrienne.landsteiner@state.mn.us](mailto:adrienne.landsteiner@state.mn.us), 651-201-3635

**Web Site:** [www.health.state.mn.us/occhealth](http://www.health.state.mn.us/occhealth)

**Major Outputs:**

- We have continued our collaborative relationships with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), Minnesota OSHA, and the University of Minnesota Midwest Center for Occupational Health and Safety, as well as other MDH programs. Two examples of collaboration with the DLI:
  - DLI requested the inclusion of six Occupational Health Indicators in their widely-disseminated annual workplace safety report to complement their presentation of SOII, FOI, and workers compensation data.
  - DLI and MDH were awarded a grant (one of four states) from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics to conduct interviews of state SOII participants in specific high-risk industry groups to identify factors that may be associated with underreporting of occupational injuries and illnesses. MDH provided consultation on hiring interviewers, survey instrument, and IRB approval process. Interviews are almost completed for the targeted industries in Minnesota (hospital/nursing home and metal fabrication industries).
    - *Intermediate Outcome:* The inclusion of six of the Occupational Health Indicators in the 2012 DLI Workplace Safety Report (<http://www.dli.mn.gov/RS/WorkplaceSafety.asp>) provided a more complete representation of the rates and trends of occupational injury and disease in Minnesota to a broad range of occupational health and safety professionals who have the responsibility for prioritizing and evaluating prevention programs.
    - *Potential Outcome:* The BLS/SOII undercount study data should provide critical information on how several high risk industries complied with SOII reporting requirements and the possible impact on the presumed undercount of injuries and illnesses reported to SOII – the primary source of national data on the occurrence of occupational injuries and illnesses. Data from the four participating states may identify how SOII reporting can be improved.
- We served on the advisory work group for a federal grant supporting a two-year project encouraging more employers to offer vaccines in the workplace. The Minnesota Department of Health Immunization program is directing the program and we have provided advice, recommendations, and data to aid in their activities.
  - *Potential Outcome:* The data will provide context for the immunization program in understanding the diversity of Minnesota's employee population and will allow for a more directed implementation of their plans for improved vaccination rates in worker populations.
- We have increased our collaboration with our MDH CDC-funded Asthma Program. This collaboration focuses on work-related asthma and involved the following activities during the past grant year:
  - The MDH Asthma Program re-convened their advisory workgroup to address the issues of work-related asthma in Minnesota. As collaborators, we participated in their advisory panel meetings.

- Asthma Program staff assisted us in the development of a webpage devoted to work-related asthma (<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/occhealth/respiratory.html>).
- We are providing statistical data analysis and interpretation to the Asthma Program for a statewide survey of 1,900 cosmetologists regarding health and safety training, potential exposures, and respiratory health. All licensed cosmetologists in the state of Minnesota were invited by email to participate in the online survey. Preliminary findings from the survey were presented via a Fact Sheet at a CDC asthma meeting in Atlanta in June, 2013.
  - *Potential Outcome:* The cosmetology survey data will provide an understanding of the frequency and depth of health and safety training provided to individuals employed in cosmetology, the hazards they encounter, and the prevalence of asthma-related symptoms. Recommendations to reduce occupational risks were included in the Fact Sheet presented at the CDC meeting in Atlanta.
- Due in part to NIOSH coding support and a request from the Minnesota Occupational Health and Surveillance Program, the Minnesota Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Program (BFSS) included occupation and industry on the 2013 survey.
  - *Potential Outcome:* For the first time in over a decade, Minnesota will have population-based data linking a variety of health outcomes and behaviors to occupation and industry. These data may identify new hypotheses for future etiologic studies, as well as priorities for Workplace Health Wellness programs.
- As of June 2013, all 19 specified 2010 Occupational Health Indicators had been completed and submitted to NIOSH for presentation on the CSTE website.
- We have updated and redesigned our website to include dedicated webpages for the Minnesota Occupational Health and Safety Surveillance Program ([www.health.state.mn.us/occhealth](http://www.health.state.mn.us/occhealth)). The new web pages include the Occupational Health Indicators and other grant-related topic areas. Indicator data for all available years are available on the website with completed trend analysis and interpretation for the years 2000-2010.
  - *Potential Outcome:* Monitoring health is considered an essential service of public health. Public health professionals, as well as the general public, look to state health department web pages for a wide variety of health information and data. Providing access to occupational health surveillance data is a critical component of public health and provides the necessary data for the development, prioritization, and evaluation of prevention programs.
- A comprehensive literature review and collaboration with the New Hampshire and North Carolina State Based Surveillance programs has been undertaken to address the number of injuries related to agriculture. The proposed project would make use of hospitalization discharge data to create an indicator measuring the frequency and rate of injuries related to agriculture in a state. In Minnesota, inpatient and outpatient data are available, enhancing the completeness of the measure. The proposed project also includes an estimate of the economic impact of agricultural-related injury. Data collection was initiated in May 2013.
  - *Potential Outcome:* The new indicator could provide policy makers and safety and health professionals with surveillance data on the rates and trends of serious agricultural-related injuries – data that are currently not available from other existing indicators or national statistics. Surveillance data, along with direct and indirect cost estimates, will better support the justification for, and evaluation of, agriculture-related health and safety programs.

- With the aid of a University of Minnesota graduate student intern, all Minnesota high schools were invited to participate in an online survey to determine to what extent, if any, occupational health and safety training was offered to students during the past school year. The response rate was >50%. The survey asked the principal (or a designate assigned by the principal) about which classes/grades where such training was offered, the content of the training, the barriers to offering such training, among other items. The survey also asked whether the school was making use of any existing occupational health and safety curricula, such as the NIOSH curriculum or the *Work Safe Work Smart* curriculum developed by the Minnesota Department of Health. The survey and preliminary data analysis was conducted during May-June, 2013.
  - *Potential Outcome:* Preliminary analysis suggests that occupational health and safety training was generally limited to specific technical/vocational classes (e.g. wood or metal shop) and very few schools offered a more generalized or formal curriculum. This survey provides information on the barriers to offering such training and identifies potential opportunities for increasing exposure and access to occupational health and safety training.

## **Publications and Presentations**

- Williams A, Kari A. “Tracking and Investigation of Asbestos-Related Diseases in Minnesota.” Invited Feature Speaker, MDH Annual Asbestos Conference, St. Paul, January 16, 2013.
- Landsteiner A, MPH, Williams A, PhD, McGovern P, PhD, Nyman J, PhD, and Lindgren P, MS. “Developing Measures of Occupational Health and Safety Related to Agriculture.” Poster presentation at the University of Minnesota’s School of Public Health Student Research Day: April 5, 2013.
- NIOSH *eNews* submission: News from our Partners for April 2013 – “Minnesota Occupational Health Indicators Now Online.” <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/enews/enewsV10N12.html>
- Landsteiner A, MPH, Williams A, PhD, Lindgren P, MS. “Rates and Trends of Occupational Fatalities in Minnesota.” Poster Presentation at the NORA Symposium, University of Minnesota School of Public Health, St. Paul. May 2, 2013.
- Landsteiner A, MPH, Williams A, PhD, Lindgren P, MS. “Occupational Health Indicators.” Poster Presentation at the NORA Symposium, University of Minnesota School of Public Health, St. Paul. May 2, 2013.
- Landsteiner A, MPH, Williams A, PhD, McGovern P, PhD, Nyman J, PhD, and Lindgren P, MS. “Developing Measures of Occupational Health and Safety Related to Agriculture.” Poster presentation at the NORA Symposium, University of Minnesota School of Public Health, St. Paul. May 2, 2013.
- Williams A, PhD. Preliminary Findings from Health Study of Minnesota Taconite Miners. *Breathing Space*: Minnesota Department of Health Respiratory Disease Newsletter. Summer (June), 2013. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/asthma/Newsletter.html>
- An announcement was made of on the Minnesota Department of Health Facebook newsfeed regarding the availability of Minnesota Occupational Health Indicators. The announcement coincided with National Public Health Week’s “Creating a Healthy Workplace Day”, April 3, 2013.